

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman
Tsunetaro Miyakoda

*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

Editors:
Kaname Tsukahara
David Vandyck

ABLE CODE : JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS : CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2,4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates : Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 118

February 1, 1958

In These Pages

Children Involved in Shrine Worship.....	1
Americans to Visit Church World Service.....	2
NCC Holds Annual Meeting.....	2
Religious Term Dictionary Planned.....	2
World Day of Prayer This Month.....	3
Protest to Education Ministry.....	3
Literature Conference Next Summer.....	4
Baptist Union Organized.....	4

CHILDREN INVOLVED IN SHRINE WORSHIP

An alleged incident of Shinto shrine worship involving public school children was the subject of a protest lodged recently by some pastors of the Church of the Reformation (Nihon Kirisuto Kaikaku Ha.) in Kobe.

The publication Christian Press, on January 10, reported that a primary school in Kobe took a group of school children on a tour to the Grand Shrine at Ise. Before making the trip, the pupils were instructed to bow twice at the shrine and to clap their hands in the traditional act of Shinto worship. The children were made to practise this before leaving for Ise. Two Christian children, members of the tour, declined to take part in the bows and clapping, and made an apology to their teacher.

The Reverend Terukazu Matsuda and others of the Church of the Reformation protested this incident. Their statement has been referred to local educational authorities, to the National Christian Council, and to the Christian Liaison Committee (an interdenominational consultative body including both Roman Catholics and Protestants). The pastors' argument is that such training of school children tends to confuse legitimate patriotism with an act of religious devotion.

AMERICANS TO VISIT CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Two officials of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. will visit Japan later this month to inspect the program of Church World Service, Protestant relief organization affiliated with the National Christian Council of Japan.

Dr. Norris Wilson, Executive Director of the Central Department of Church World Service in the United States, and Mr. Fletcher Coates, Public Relations Officer of the American National Council of Churches, are scheduled to arrive in Japan by air on February 17. They will leave Japan, flying to Seoul, Korea, on February 21.

The National Christian Council and others will welcome Dr. Wilson and Mr. Coates at a reception on February 18 at the Protestant Christian Center, Ginza, Tokyo.

NCC HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

The National Christian Council of Japan will hold its annual convention on March 11 and 12 at Fujimicho Church, Tokyo. The meeting will be the eleventh yearly convocation of this liaison agency for Protestant Christians in Japan. Definitive plans for the 1959 Centenary Observance of Protestantism in this country will be discussed.

RELIGIOUS TERM DICTIONARY PLANNED

The Literature Commission of the National Christian Council is preparing a colloquial dictionary of religious terms. Ten thousand words have been selected, and their equivalents will be given both from English to Japanese and from Japanese to English. It is expected that the new dictionary, for which many missionaries have expressed a need, will be on sale by the end of this year.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER THIS MONTH

The World Day of Prayer, February 21, the first Friday of Lent, will be observed by Christian women's groups in many parts of the country. In Tokyo, interdenominational services of prayer will be held at Holy Trinity Church in Shibuya at two o'clock in the afternoon, and again at six in the evening for working women and others unable to attend a daytime service.

This year's devotional theme is "The Bread of Life". The Order of Worship, to be followed throughout the world, was prepared by Christian women of the Australian aborigines.

Japanese women will give an offering in behalf of the leprosy program on Okinawa and refugee relief work in Hongkong. Last year Japanese participants contributed to the relief of Hungarian refugees an amount equivalent to about \$1,000.

Distribution of worship materials and publicity for Japan is in the hands of the Women's Commission of the National Christian Council.

PROTEST TO EDUCATION MINISTRY

No reaction has been received as yet to the National Christian Council's protest against a Ministry of Education proposal that movies be shown to school children throughout the country on Sunday mornings. (See ACTIVITY NEWS Number 114, November 15, 1957.)

The text of the National Christian Council's statement includes the following (translation courtesy of Japan Harvest, Tokyo):

"If the Education Ministry's plan is implemented, the situation will be extremely regrettable to us who are holding Sunday mornings open exclusively for religious education of our youth, and we should like to hereby express our opposition to the plan. The Ministry has been deeply concerned about the nurture of the ethical and religious sentiments of young people in light of the many evidences of misbehavior on the part of our younger generation since the war. Together with your efforts to combat this trend we are holding Sunday School every Sunday morning to nurture the moral training and the religious consciousness of our youth. But if the above plan is inaugurated it will make it

impossible for them to attend Sunday School and church and will thus seriously impair our endeavor. Of course, we appreciate the fact that this plan is intended to keep children from evil pictures and enable them to see good ones, but we feel constrained to strongly oppose the showing of movies at ordinary movie houses on Sunday mornings. We hope very much that you will understand our feelings about the matter and take necessary steps to carry out your program in some other way."

LITERATURE CONFERENCE NEXT SUMMER

Plans are being made for an East Asia Christian Literature Conference, to be held at Sanmaiso Hotel, Hakone, from August 15-21, 1958. The purpose of this event will be to increase the effectiveness of the Christian literature programs of the areas represented. The theme is to be "Christian Education for the Rising Generation."

It is hoped that the conference will draw together writers, literature secretaries, and resource persons from about fifteen nations lying in an area bounded on the west by Pakistan, on the southeast by New Zealand, and on the north by Japan and Korea. The East Asia Christian Conference and the Japan Commission on Christian Literature are to sponsor the gathering. Invitations have gone to national Christian councils in the various countries, or else to member churches within the East Asia Christian Conference.

The advisory committee for the conference is headed by Bishop E. C. Sobrepena of the Philippines. Keynote speakers will include Dr. Floyd Shacklock of the Literacy and Literature Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., and Mrs. Hanako Muraoka, noted Japanese writer. The Reverend Norimichi Ebizawa of the Christian Literature Commission of Japan is organizing secretary for the conference.

BAPTIST UNION ORGANIZED

A group of Baptist churchmen, meeting on January 30-31 at Hayama, voted to form a new association of church congregations, schools, and other organizations to be known as the Japan Baptist Union (Nippon Baputesuto Domei).

The announced purpose of the new Union is to "propagate the Gospel of Christ in keeping with the Baptist tradition and spirit through fellowship and cooperation by the churches, preaching places, schools, and other organizations related to the Union for the purpose of world evangelism."

The Baptist leaders made clear their ecumenical orientation by stating their desire "to affiliate with the National Christian Council and to join with all churches and Christian organizations" in both national and world evangelism. They will continue to maintain close ties with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

75 delegates coming from 24 congregations, 6 schools, and 5 other organizations took part in the Hayama meeting. Some of the congregations belonged at one time to the United Church of Christ. Others have always been independent. Still other Baptist-oriented congregations remaining outside the Union will stay within the United Church fellowship. The Hayama delegates expressed determination to maintain cordial relations with all.

The newly-elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the Japan Baptist Union is Dr. Isamu Chiba, Principal of Soshin Girls School in Yokohama and of Shokei Girls School in Sendai. Western personnel on the Board includes the Reverend Wilbur Fridell, the Reverend Bill Hinchman, and Miss Vida Post, American Baptist Missionaries.

